h: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

them killed him with stones. This modified account, also, Señor Encinas duly conveyed to me. 124

Still later, in collecting linguistic material through the Seri interpreter with the assistance of Señor Alvarez-Lane, I recurred to the subject incidentally (or at least ostensibly so) on two or three occasions, partly with the view of verifying or disproving the current report that the men were eaten by the Indians; and since the first distrust on the part of the interpreter and the companions (by whom he was commonly surrounded) had worn off, the questions were answered freely and with apparent truth. In brief, the information gained in this way was a repetition in general terms of the statement of the killing of both men; but the responses indicated (1) that the Indians are not cannibals, (2) that they do not eat any portion or portions of the body of an enemy slain in war, (3) that they do not eat human flesh in a sacrificial way, and (4), specifically, that they did not eat the flesh of the two white men killed last spring. I am disposed to give credence to all of these statements. 648 [266]

Señor Encinas informed me that for a long time after the reputed killing of the two Americans on the island the Seri were exceptionally shy and were seldom seen on the mainland; that the first representatives of the tribe to appear were one or two old women who came to his rancho with much trepidation; that these representatives being not ill-treated, a man appeared, who was also well treated, and that still later other members of the tribe appeared, though it was only a few days before our visit that any considerable body of the Seri Indians showed themselves at their favorite mainland haunt on his rancho. It was his first communication with the Indians since the killing, and, both he and they agreed, the first confession of the crime outside of their own tribe. 648

While in Sonora various conflicting accounts of the affair were given me. One, to which I was disposed to attach credence by reason of the character of my informant and his explanation of the circumstances under which the information was gained, was given me (just before the visit referred to above) by ex-Consul Forbes, of Guaymas. This account corresponds in all essential details with that conveyed to my party by the Indians, except that, according to Mr Forbes' account, the survivors were altogether unarmed after the borrowing of the rifle by the Indians, and that when the man in the boat arose suddenly and shouted he pointed at the Indians not a gun but a stick, in the hope of deceiving them thereby, as he was fortunate enough to do. 115 124 648

It may be added that the Seri Indians are at the same time the most primitive and the most bloodthirsty and treacherous of the Indians of North America, so far as my knowledge extends; also that their character is well known throughout Sonora, and indeed generally throughout Mexico, Arizona, and the southern part of California. I was assured by the acting governor of Sonora and by the prefect of Hermosillo that it would be little short of suicide for even a Mexican official to visit these Indians or land on their island without an armed guard. Through conference with the Indians, also, I learned that any white man, Mexican, or Indian of another tribe coming in contact with them is killed without the slightest compunction, unless they are restrained by fear. Accordingly I am satisfied that the character of the Seri Indians is quite as bad as the unsavory reputation they have acquired throughout the Southwest. 181 648

It should be observed that while the Indians were unable to give the names of the men killed, their description of men and vessel agreed exactly with those of the newspaper correspondent Robinson and his companion, and with the sloop *Examiner*, and Mr Forbes' information was obtained direct from the survivors of the expedition of which Mr Robinson had charge. There can thus be no doubt that it was Mr Robinson and his companion who were killed by these Indians, and whose killing was confessed by them, as set forth above. 124 648

With great respect, your obedient servant,

W J McGee,
Ethnologist in charge.

Honorable S. P. Langley,
Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

1: McGee Σ-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

and cosmopolite characters of higher humanity; the dearth of extraneous devices denotes absence or intolerance of that aecultural interchange accompanying and marking the progress of peoples; and the dearth of inventions denotes feebleness of creative faculty and absence of that self-confidence which accompanies and measures progress in nature-conquest. 105 13 182 [177]

4. When the local and fortuitous features of the Seri craft are viewed in their serial or sequential relations, they are found to reflect and attest autochthonal development. Excepting the few aecultural processes and devices whose acquisition may confidently be traced to certain social intersections of the historic period, the Seri technic is too closely tied to local environment to warrant any supposition of importation from other districts. The question of the birthplace of the people may be left open in this case as in every other; but the birthplace of practically all those activities and activital products which define the folk as human was manifestly Seriland itself—so that the tribe, considered as a human folk rather than as a zoic variety, must be classed as autochthonous. 105 177

Summarily, then, the Seri industries are significant as (1) local, (2) fortuitous, (3) primitive, and (4) autochthonous; and these features combine to illumine a noteworthy stage in primitive thought. 185

5. On juxtaposing these significant features of Seri technic, they are found to reflect the tribal mind with noteworthy fidelity, and hence to indicate the sources of Seri mentations, and of the local culture in which these mentations are integrated. The local foodstuffs—especially that vital standard of values in arid regions, water—are periodic sources of the strongest aspirations and inspirations of industrial life, and the methods and devices for food-getting are but the legitimate offspring of the inevitable relation between effort and environment; the conspicuous rôle of chance is but the composite of the hard and capricious environment on the one hand, and of the lowly thought reflecting that environment on the other hand; the zoic faith into which the magma of recurrent chance has semicrystallized finds carnate symbols either in local beasts or in fantastic monsters suggested by those beasts; even the mating instinct, second only to thirst among the impelling action-factors of the folk, is so profoundly and bitterly provincial as to exclude foreign ideals to a degree unparalleled among known peoples. The industrial materials are local—but not more local than the thoughts in which they are reflected; the technical methods are unmistakably the offspring of the environment—but they are equally the offspring of minds reflecting that environment and no other; the few and simple devices stand for integrations of experiences, instinctive rather than ratiocinative, the germ of invention rather than even its opening bud—but the experiences bear the marks of that environment and no other. Accordingly, the mental side of Seri industry, and, indeed, of all Seri life, appears to be the counterpart of the physical side. 13 181 182

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

● 181 153 side. The Seri mind is (1) local, (2) chance-dominated, (3) exceeding lowly, and especially (4) autochthonal in its content and workings.

000 There is an aspect of the inference as to the local and autochthonal character of the Seri mind which is of wide-reaching application. As indicated by many tribes, though most clearly by the Seri, there is a definite relation between the somatic characteristics of primitive folk and their environment; the indications are that the relation is inversely proportionate to development, the lowliest tribes reflecting environment most closely, and the higher peoples responding less delicately to the environmental pressure in the ratio of their increased power of nature-conquest; and the relation is essentially phylogenetic, in that it sums and integrates the innumerable interactions between organic kind and environment during generations or ages. It is to be realized that the relation is not simple and direct or physiologic merely (e. g., like that between climate and the pelage of an animal), but that it is linked through the human activities; for, as is conspicuously the case in Seri-land, the environment prompts exercises of particular kinds, and it is these exercises that shape the somatic features, such as strength of lung, length of limb, and the soundness of constitution displayed in physical endurance; yet the relation is none the less real, in that it operates through the activities rather than directly. The relation may be characterized with respect to mechanism as bodily responsion, or with respect to capacity as *responsivity of body*. Now, as is well illustrated by the provincial ideation of the Seri, the relation between environment and physique is accompanied by a corresponding relation between environment and thought. This relation, too, varies inversely with development, the connection being closest among the most primitive tribes, and growing less and less close with maturing mentality and proportionately increasing power of nature-contest; and the relation is still less direct (or physiologic merely) than that between the human body and its environment, in that not only the bodily activities but the instinctive and nascently ratiocinative processes are interposed. This relation between mind and environment may be characterized as mental responsion in its mechanical aspect, or as *responsivity of mind* when regarded as a psychic property.[1] Accordingly, the relation between the tribal mind and its environment, as illumined by the peculiarly delicate interactions observed among the Seri, seem to indicate the genesis and earlier developmental stages of mentality in its multifarious aspects.

The specially significant feature of the relation between environment on the one hand and body + mind on the other is its diminishing value with general intellectual advancement. Viewed serially, the

[1] The responsivity of mind has been defined elsewhere as the basis of knowledge, and as one of five fundamental principles of science (The Cardinal Principles of Science, Proceedings of the Washington Academy of Sciences, vol. II, 1900, pp. 1-13).

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930)1931 NU31 Seri NU31

to prepared defence or attack. The Seri mode of life and induced temperament must have led to many instabilities, with make-shifts often actually more in use, but finished or efficient types of artifact seemingly latent and sporadically emerging in the stream of their culture. Thus, the shell alongside the double-bladed paddle; plain baskets seen in use, but a series patterned in a definite style being produced as soon as their manufacture was profitable; unroofed and roofed houses. Similarly, the two-pointed fish-spear and olla carrying-net, which neither McGee nor I saw, but which may persist in memory in the culture ready for revival on occasion.

Somewhat similar, perhaps, is the status of polygyny, which prevailed in McGee's day (p. 279) a half generation after a disastrous war, but was not the rule, or was successfully disavowed, in earlier times and to-day.

Errors and Misconstructions

McGee dwells at length (pp. 152-156) on three strong trends of Seri life and culture: the pedestrian habit, accompanied by quite exceptional fleetness; a hand and tooth sense with corresponding absence of tool sense; and a race sense unalterably opposed to mixture with alien blood.

All the Sonora and Southwestern Indians were and largely still are fast and sustained long-distance travelers on foot. There is nothing to show that the Seri were superior to the others. The one time they remember having met the Papago in a foot-ball race, they were beaten. Yaqui warfare is a record of at least equal endurance and ability to evade superior civilized forces. In fact the faculties of the Yaqui are the more remarkable in that they have always been settled farmers and often moved in larger bodies. The incredible fleetness of the Seri was probably most manifest in mesquite thickets and on rocky ground. That they should outrun a horseman on an open plain is the sort of tale that one hears on every frontier and which the more intelligent frontiersman does not take seriously.

Hand and tooth sense was undoubtedly strong among the Seri. The same thing, especially as regards food, is reported for the Lower Californians. But the inference of lack of tool sense is erroneous. Knives are prized by the Seri, and, along with nails, axes, and the like, are handled with a direct, crude effectiveness. The crudity is due to the lack of standard, order, and interest in finish which pervades all Seri cultural manifestations and which rests ultimately on their essential isolation and self-sufficiency in an unusually forbidding environment. What a Seri is interested in is not a neat job but one that will substantially meet his immediate need. Their modern plank boats are weak in plan, badly joined, and always leaky; but they serve. A structurally stronger boat would probably profit noth-

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930) 1931 NU31 Seri NU31

ing, because it would be swamped in a sea which it could resist. The joining and calking are always carried far enough that the boat can be bailed faster than it leaks. That the Seri prefer to bail rather than to finick over joints, is a matter of preference. Most of our real frontier life runs on much the same plan, though sprung from a tradition of intrinsic standard and provided with a superior tool equipment. Tribes like the Walapai and Papago, who live in nearly the same desert, show much of the Seri combination of technological crudeness and effectiveness. They do make an exception in basketry, which is what has chiefly reached our museum cases from their culture; but the Davis-Heye collection shows that the Seri too can make baskets of unsuspected quality. My impression, based on the way the Seri handle their knives, boats, bows, and the like, is that they have excellent practical mechanical sense, but that their standards are astonishingly different from our own. Most people that depended so much on sailing their boats as the modern Seri do, would not be content with two sticks, a blanket, and a harpoon line. But, given the willingness to operate with this equipment, very few would be as successful in quickly rigging and skilfully handling the sail. And sailing is something the Seri have recently learned or evolved. They are the frontiersmen of native culture: hardy, rude, unorganized, practical, efficient; but, like our own frontiersmen, in no sense only half emerged from the tool-less animal. McGee was so inspired by the desire to find ultimate "primitiveness" among the Seri that he often ignored the tremendous effect of their habitat which he so well observed and described. After all, in his day cultural evolutionism was still in vogue.

As to race sense, McGee seems partly but only partly right. Chico Romero of his own accord asked me if other Indians had venereal diseases, and on the return question replied that the Seri were entirely free from them. I also saw and heard of no half-breeds. On the other hand, Chico's historical tradition told of the violation and keeping of captive Tepoca women, and since his own son was descended from one of them, in the second generation, Chico's mother-in-law must have been a Tepoca. McGee's "alien conjugal union" as the "blackest crime" (p. 11) is therefore an exaggeration, and his informant's statement that a Papago woman captive among the Seri never could have had children because she was an alien slave (p. 278), must rest upon a misunderstanding.

The groom's continence for a year after marriage as a moral test before admission to full husbandly status (pp. 280-3), is probably a matriarchally colored fantasy based on another misunderstanding. As already mentioned, Chico was interested, but mildly ribaldly amused, at the idea when it was put before him as a foreign Indian custom. He reacted like the average white man under the circumstances, not in the least like an actor skilfully feigning ignorance.

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930) 1931 NU31 Seri NU31

by them at times. This raises the question of whether the Seri may not have reached their habitat from the peninsula, or possibly the reverse. The solution of this problem depends on an analysis of full data on physical type, speech, and culture content, and only a partly conclusive answer, discussed below, can as yet be given. In general behavior and temperament, Seri and peninsular Californians seem to have been strikingly alike; but this fact can not in itself be construed as evidence of common origin, because the similar psychology may be largely determined by similar residence and subsistence habits resting in turn on almost parallel environment; much as pastoral nomads or mariners in whatever part of the world, and with or without historical connections, are likely to exhibit analogous mental attitudes in contrast with rural or urban populations.

In any event, it is wholly unproved that the Seri possess a native endowment which is more animal-like, more dominated by instinctive impulses and less capable of cultural development, than other peoples'. In fact the improbability of such an assumption is indicated by their possession of culture traits, like certain games and their kinship system, which they either share with neighboring tribes or have developed into rather high specialization. The meagernesses of their culture are therefore evidently due to factors in their particular history or geography rather than to congenital deficiencies or abnormalities. This does not mean that it would be easy to convert the Seri to the mode of life of Pima or Mexican. Habits of irresponsibility and unsettlement once established, even through part of childhood only, are notoriously difficult to alter. Witness the Gypsies. However, such practical habit difficulties are of course no evidence as to quality of endowment.

The modern Seri are the amalgamated remnants of some three or four of a half dozen closely related Serian groups formerly recognized. The preponderant one in the fusion of these groups is likely to have been that which held Tiburon and the fronting mainland, on account of better preservation of their numbers and habits in the relatively inaccessible island refuge.

Seri physique is distinctive in physiognomy, expression, and habitus, as would be expectable in a people sharply set off from its neighbors in practises and attitudes. The measurements available show no very marked differences of gross anatomy from neighboring tribes, either in stature, head shape, or nose proportion. The head may be somewhat rounder than among Pima and Yaqui; the difference in body seems more to be one of greater slenderness than of greater height. The Seri abilities to endure hunger and fatigue and to run great distances are faculties possessed by nearly all tribes of the southwest United States and northwest Mexico.

The Seri language is intrinsically and markedly tonal, more given to consonantal accumulations than the neighboring Uto-Aztecan and

3:Davis & Dawson 1-5 (1932-1940) 1945
MU31 Seri MU31

THE SAVAGE SERIS OF SONORA—I

By EDWARD H. DAVIS AND E. YALE DAWSON

WHEN the Seri Indians pass into extinction, "good riddance" will be voiced by many a Mexican, for centuries of warfare against the invaders of their inhospitable lands have made this small tribe notorious among the aborigines of Mexico. Many people will be ignorant of their passing, but a few of us even now watch with some regret the losing struggle of their diminishing numbers against the spreading civilization that tramples out the wild things and destroys the natural features of the earth. With the Seri goes a link with a past, primeval age of nature in America, for these are a strange and primitive people, a people whose lives and habits assign them to the initial place in the scale of cultural development among American Indians, and hence to the lowest recognised phase of savagery.

In 1540 one of Coronado's officers was the first to capture and bring into the army encampment in Sonora a Seri warrior, an Indian so large and tall that his stature created a sensation among the Spanish soldiery. It was three and a half centuries, however, before the Seri tribe was finally subjugated by an invading force, and then only after the slaughter of nine-tenths of its population.

In modern times, though the encroachment of settlements has forced the Seris into domestic contact with the Mexican people, few outsiders have ever come to know them. Until the fishing village of Kino was settled some ten years ago, there were only two men they counted real friends among aliens. The senior author was one of those. Today the Seri not only must tolerate the encroachment of the Mexican, but must suffer from imported diseases which are gradually destroying him. The present life of the Seri is but an echo of its past, but in this modern world the habits of the survivors of America's most primitive people are none the less astonishing. Their gradual acquisition of modern implements and materials has gone along with centuries of warfare and bloodshed, and their submission to law entails a long story of violence. Before considering these more recent phases of their history, however, let

[p. 193(A)]

9:Malkin E-5 (1953-1955)1962 NU31 Seri NU31

237 On the other hand, the hides of all of these three animals had been traded off to the Mexicans, [439] but this again was now discarded. This would [182] merely indicate the fluctuation of collapse of the demand from the outside rather than any intrinsic change in the Seri values.

Incidental use of the horns of the bighorn had been denied by all of the younger informants although admitted by Miguel Barnett. However, as I observed, the horns of this sheep are sometimes [415] used as drinking cups. Several of them were [181] lying around in the usual disorderly way of the Seris, now and then picked up for drinking and then again discarded. But the use of them struck me as most casual.

224 411 *Hunting:* Hunting takes a variety of forms and includes a variety of weapons, from .22 caliber and .30/.30 caliber rifles to spear, stone and throwing stick. Bighorn and deer are followed on foot but without dogs, probably because without dogs they may be easier to surprise. This hunt takes place in daytime. But the peccary is hunted with both the spear and the rifle and with a pack [231] of dogs, and only by the adult men. There is an [885] emphasis on the "adult," this surely owing to the certain amount of danger connected with the chase of the peccaries. The weapons of the chase dwindle to the throwing stick or a stone when it comes to the jackrabbit. Badgers, I was told, are also killed with the same weapons. But formerly, the informants said, bow and arrow was much instrumental in hunting the smaller beasts.

* 825 Other animals, according to the Seris, are not [224] hunted now, nor had they been in the past. Justification for this ranged from the usual "because it isn't done" to the more specific reasons. The skunk is "neither hunted nor eaten because it [225] stinks." The whale is considered "too big to kill" while the killer whale is "too fierce." The harmless *tonita* (dolphin)[1] was reported somewhat hazily as "sometimes killed" but the comments were inconclusive and were denied by other informants.

[224] Two other species had been reported as hunted in the past but not at the present time. The Ringtail cat was supposedly hunted with the slings [225] while the sea lion was hunted down "with a rifle or rock but not with the harpoon because of its great strength, it would break the harpoon." This, however, was "perhaps 25 years ago." Why the sea lion is no longer pursued is uncertain, unless there is again a lack of demand from the outside while the Serian economy is so much centered on fishing.

231 *Pets:* How many species of animals are kept as pets on and off is difficult to say. Like most hunting and gathering groups the Seris are fond of pets but their interest in them depends entirely on an accidental capture. Among the wild mammals of the region there are few that could be captured and tamed easily. The badger which I mentioned already was the only mammal I saw

[237] [363] [1] I have seen bones of beached whales used for stools and also the skull of the *tonita* used as a chair. But it must be remembered that these animals got stranded on the beach. They were not deliberately hunted down.

[P. 10 B]

½ [i.e. - deer, bighorn and peccary - Analyst]

123 As a concrete result of that first trip to Tiburon, I secured a
115 *balsa* (boat) made of *carrizo* canes lashed together with native fibre,
501 which *balsa* Mr. Heye said it was the finest one in North America.

[226] This *balsa* was given to me without hesitation, although it furnished one or two families with sea food.

115 I wish to pay tribute to Senor Roberto Thomson who has been my constant companion, friend, guide and interpreter during the past twenty years, on all my trips to Tiburon and various parts of Mexico. I found him absolutely dependable, using excellent judgment in critical situations. He was honest, fair, intelligent, looking out constantly for my safety and comfort always, enduring hardships cheerfully. A better all-round out-door man I have never seen equaled. In short, he is a real *hombre*, and muy *simpatico*.

13 Tiburon, or *Shark Island*, long noted for its evil reputation as
181 the home of the most savage and treacherous Indians of North America,
193 lies in latitude 29°north and 112°30' west longitude, in the Gulf of California. It is shaped like a parallelogram about thirty-five miles long and eighteen to twenty miles wide, and lies parallel to the coast of Sonora, Mexico, of which, no doubt, at some remote period, it once formed a part.

It is separated from the mainland, for the most part, by a strait
[127] called *El Infernillo*, or The Little Hell, through which the rising tides pour a resistless flood. It is a desert island and supports a desert arboreal vegetation which includes several varieties of the cactus family and the *mesquite, palo verde, palo fierro, torote, palo blanco, ocotillo* and others. The giant *saguaro, barbueso* and *pitahalla (pit-a-haya)* cactus are found here also.

Two desert ranges run lengthwise of the Island, which, on its westward or windward side, terminate in sea-worn cliffs against whose ramparts dash the heavy breakers of the Gulf, and on its eastern side, by long alluvial aprons from the foot of the mountains, sloping gently down to the lovely shell-strewn beaches. From this side the foot of the mountains lies from two to five miles distant. On this, the leeward side of Tiburon, the sea is much calmer, and often, in the early morning, it is as smooth and placid as a lake, reflecting each rosy, lavender and purple tint of the rugged Sierra Seri along the Sonoran coast, as in a mirror. The exquisite loveliness of marvelous sunrises over the pure limpid waters of the *Estrecho Infernillo* is mystical.

134 The soil is loose and sandy, unsuitable for cultivation, and im-
241 possible for producing domestic crops of any
142 kind.

000 possible for producing domestic crops of any kind. There is no water
312 for irrigation, and drinking water is very scarce, rising in only a few parts of the Island in places known only to the Indians.

648 For centuries these nomads of the wastes have borne an evil repu-
• [10] tation as killers and cannibals, and many an expedition to the Island for trade or exploration has never left its beautiful shores. Lured away from their boats by friendly gestures of the Indians, every last man has been killed by arrow or rifle and the expedition never heard from. No survivor has ever returned to relate his experience and, up to the time of my visit, a man risked his life to go among the Seris on their Island.

Time after time, for four hundred years, the Spaniards, and later the Mexicans, have tried to exterminate them. They have been ambushed, hunted, killed on sight for years; diseases have decimated them: they have been the Ishmaelites among the native tribes of Mexico, with every man's hand against them. Now only a small remnant survives.

[13] They have also taken heavy toll of those who have invaded their territory, which at one time extended from Altar on the north to Guaymas on the south, and from Hermosillo to the coast. When hard pressed, they retired to their Island sanctuary where, deep in the rugged ranges, they have defied pursuit. They are strong, brave, neither asking nor giving quarter in battle---men of marvelous endurance, tireless walkers, swift runners, wonderful trackers.

Within the last few years the Government has definitely set aside Tiburon as their exclusive home and sanctuary, with a strip along the mainland as their hunting and fishing ground, and where they can harvest the fruits of the giant cacti without fear of being killed. No person is allowed on this Island without special permission from the Governor of Sonora, or their Superintendent and devoted friend, Roberto Thomson. The Government has declared a permanent closed season on Seris.

175 As to the reputation of these nomads of the wastes of being can-
648 nibals, I quote the following extract from the *Life of Bill Fain:*
266

After I had been in Yuma some time, a Yuma school teacher asked what I knew about Tiburon Island and the Seris. He said he had heard there was gold on the Island and he in company with a sailor intended to go down there. I said "Partner, I have been at the head of the Gulf several times, and interviewed many Mexican sailors and fishermen. These Seris are murderers and cannibals and my advice is, don't go, for as sure as God made little apples, you and your friend will make a fine feast for the *Tiburones.*"

He said the sailor would manage the boat and they would prospect on the Island and pack the gold out. And besides, they were going unarmed and trust themselves to the tender mercies of the most treacherous Indians in North America. I told him, "My advice is to stay just as far away from that Island as you can, if you want to teach school any longer." My advice was thrown away.

Some weeks later several mining men in skirting the coast opposite Tiburon, came across a place where the Seris had evidently been feasting on human flesh,

175 Indians. Dr. McGee, confirming Bill Fain's story of the disappearance
698 of Robinson and Logan, the San Francisco newspapermen, secured the
266 facts from a Seri who spoke Spanish, as follows:

> On reaching the Island, Robinson and Logan asked the natives if there were any deer to be shot and receiving an affirmative reply, they started for the interior toward the mountain with several Seris as escort, leaving the two other men with the boats. On the face of it, this was a most foolhardy performance and Robinson actually loaned his rifle to one of the Seris, who accompanied him. The Seri shot Logan in the back and wounded Robinson who called for help. In trying to escape he stumbled and fell and the Indians beat his brains out with rocks.

On the Gulf Coast, this list of killed and of course eaten, could be greatly enlarged and leads to the fact that, up to recent years, no stranger---American, Mexican or Indian---could land on Tiburon and live. Ever since Sonora was settled, two or three hundred years ago, the Island has borne a sinister reputation and up to recent years, it has lived up to its reputation. Even now, no one is allowed to land on the Island without permission of the Governor or the Superintendent.

• [181] The Island of Tiburon is isolated, its approaches guarded by deserts and sea, and its people the wildest and most primitive race in North America---every man's hand against them, and they against every body.

175 Dr. McGee's investigations in 1895 failed to convict the Seris of
648 cannibalism or of eating any part of either whites or Indians, killed
266 on the Island or killed in battle. This reputation of cannibalism is
114 prevalent in Mexico as well as in the United States, but the charge has never been proven.

It is true, they eat the flesh of animals raw as well as partially cooked, and that may have given rise to this gruesome reputation, but my own investigations covering several visits on the Island and on the Sonoran coast, failed to convince me that they had eaten human flesh. They told me themselves they had not, and if all reports of cannibalism by the Seris were traced back to their source, they would end in surmise or guesswork. No one, so far as I have been able to find, has actually seen a Seri eat human flesh. Until such a witness, can be produced, the Seri remains unconvicted.

Let us examine the so-called evidence of the mining men, as quoted by Bill Fain: the finding of a white man's hands spiked to a cross, and the schoolmaster's papers scattered on the Gulf Coast of Sonora. This evidence is too circumstantial. The discs of leather even fitted the holes in the bag.

In the first place, nails are scarce in Sonora, and no Seri at that time would risk his life to procure nails or spikes at any ranch. Nearly all woods in that region are hard and would almost certainly turn a nail. The Seris had no axes to chop trees to make crosses, and